

EXHIBIT 2
H-17-07
117

Testimony in Support of HB117: An Act Requiring Newborn Hearing Screening and Education

Proponent:

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Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kathy Johnson, and I have been the audiologist at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind for 27 years.

Without a doubt, the most exciting technological advance that has happened during my career has been the ability to screen newborn babies for hearing loss.

Prior to this development, most children with a significant hearing loss were not identified until they were between 2 and 3 years old. These first years are prime language development time in their brain, and what we know now is that you can't make up for this time.

Due to the advent of Newborn Hearing Screening programs and equipment, we can now identify many of these children before they leave the hospital, and can thus get started on amplification, speech, language and sign language development very early. This can mean that hearing impaired children have the opportunity to develop to their highest potential. It also means that the family can have the help that they need to work with their child.

Family support is critical, as most deaf children are born to two hearing parents, who may have never even seen a deaf person before. They need help in learning how to work with their child, make decisions about amplification or a cochlear implant, how to teach their baby to speak and communicate, etc.

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind is charged with helping families cope with a hearing impaired child and to provide outreach services to the child and their family.

It is critical, therefore, that the Newborn Hearing Screenings take place at the birthing facility and that the results are recorded and disseminated appropriately. Many babies do not pass on the first test for a variety of reasons, but need follow-up care and then a re-screen.

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Montana can be rightfully proud that more than 98% of the babies born in hospitals are screened for hearing loss. We do need to be sure that those babies who fail the screening receive the appropriate follow-up care and evaluations and that the reporting reaches the correct people to ensure that none of these babies "fall through the cracks".

I feel that this bill will go a long way to address these concerns and urge you to support it.

Thank you very much,

Kathy Johnson

NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING

Rank Order of Birthing Facilities, Calendar 2005

(Birth Certificates as Denominator)

September, 2006

9/19/2006

(Last Year for NO CHECK OF DUPLICATES)

Facility	Total Infants born in 2005 reported in HI*TRACK by BF's	Total Infants Born in MT Hospitals From Birth Certificates	Counting BC Net Pop Percent Completed * Screening	2005 Preliminary Rank Order
Less than 100 births/year:				
Marias Medical Center (Shelby)	32	29	103.45%	tie for 1st
Big Horn County Memorial Hospital (Hardin)	24	24	100.00%	tie for 1st
Liberty County Hospital (Chester)	13	13	100.00%	tie for 1st
Sheridan Memorial Hospital (Plentywood)	15	15	100.00%	tie for 1st
Clark Fork Valley Hospital (Plains)	33	35	94.29%	2nd
Central Montana Medical Center (Lewistown)	82	84	91.67%	tie for 3rd
Northern Rockies Medical Center (Cut Bank)	37	36	91.67%	tie for 3rd
Pondera Medical Center (Conrad)	50	50	90.00%	4th
Glendive Medical Center	78	78	84.62%	5th
Powell County Memorial Hospital (Deer Lodge)	18	18	83.33%	6th
Barrett Hospital & Healthcare (Dillon)	69	86	80.23%	7th
St John's Lutheran Hospital (Libby)	68	100	67.00%	8th
Community Hospital of Anaconda	30	41	63.41%	9th
Beartooth Hospital & Health Center (Red Lodge)	0	3	0.00%	last
	549	612		
100 to 200 births/year:				
St Luke Community Hospital (Ronan)	149	146	100.68%	Tie for 1st
Frances Mahon Deaconess Hospital (Glasgow)	167	166	100.00%	Tie for 1st
Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital (Hamilton)	189	196	95.92%	2nd
Livingston Memorial Hospital	162	163	90.74%	3rd
Blackfeet Service Unit (Browning)	186	184	89.62%	4th
NE Montana Health Services, Inc. (Wolf Point)	104	103	87.25%	5th
North Valley Hospital (Whitefish)	204	250	78.28%	6th
Sidney Health Center	32	103	29.13%	7th
St Joseph Hospital (Polson)	20	124	16.13%	last
	1213	1435		
200 to 500 births/year:				
Crow Agency (PHS Indian Hospital)	166	168	97.02%	1st
Northern Montana Hospital (Havre)	337	359	93.04%	2nd
St James Healthcare (Butte)	404	436	90.83%	3rd
Holy Rosary Health Center (Miles City)	229	253	86.56%	4th
	1136	1216		
500 to 1000 births/year:				
Kalispell Regional Medical Center	842	830	100.85%	1st
Bozeman Deaconess Hospital	957	1050	89.16%	2nd
St Peter's Hospital (Helena)	571	718	74.23%	3rd
	2370	2598		
More than 1000 births/year:				
Benefis Health Care (Great Falls)	1407	1361	102.06%	Tie for 1st
Community Medical Center, Inc. (Missoula)	1633	1594	101.63%	Tie for 1st
St Vincent Healthcare (Billings)	1282	1269	100.95%	Tie for 1st
Deaconess Billings Clinic	1128	1171	96.41%	last
	5450	5395		

* The number of babies for whom screening has been COMPLETED is calculated as follows:

(Number passing inpatient or outpatient screening or referred when not passing screening)-(deaths and refusals)
Number of babies with birth certificates born in hospital minus deaths and refusals